

JerseyJazz

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jazz has wheels

Jazzmobile comes to Newark

Ray Mantilla in Newark's North Ward.
Photo by James Mathieu Andres.

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jazz mobile!

By Linda Lobdell
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Ray Mantilla, airborne.

Jazzmobile rolled into Newark this year for the first time ever, and *Jersey Jazz* caught up with it on the final night of 10 summer nights in Newark parks and neighborhoods. We couldn't miss it, since it was right around the corner from home.

Originally a New York City phenomenon, bringing Jazzmobile to Newark was the brainchild of the late bassist Earl May. His widow, Lee May, was present at the event and explained that Earl had proposed marriage to her right here in Newark's Branch Brook Park, the backdrop for this concert. Just beyond the bandstand were the Ballantine Gates, portal to the Olmsted-designed park nestled alongside Newark's Historic Forest Hill District. Ms. May, along with the Reverend Bill Howard of Bethany Church (another of Newark's jazz institutions) and Mayor Cory Booker extended the formal invitation to the Jazzmobile crew.

The audience was a mix of neighborhood folk, jazz lovers from other areas who travel around to find it, city workers, Jazzmobile staffers like Linda Walton, VP of Programming, and Cephas Bowles from WBGO. Seeking a dance partner, I convinced a city employee to put down his clipboard and do some salsa.



Ray Mantilla... is equally at home interpreting gems from the fields of bop and swing and recasting them into his element, while retaining the chemistry of the originals. — allmusic.com



Jocelyn Medina

Photos by James Mathieu Andres

www.JamesMathieuAndres.com



Lee May, center, talks with Newark Councilman Carlos Gonzalez, right.

For more information, visit www.jazzmobile.org

Jocelyn Medina and the Brazilian Jazz Project provided the first hour or so of music — generating gentle waves of samba and bossa nova.

Headlining was Bronx-born Ray Mantilla, latin percussionist and bandleader. He’s played all the major clubs, worked with many of the greats, and he was back in the US after touring and giving master classes in Italy. His set was a mix of standards with a Latin flair, and hot Latin jazz.



Dr. Billy Taylor founded Jazzmobile in 1964. It’s a non-profit arts and education institution whose mission is to “To Present, Propagate and Preserve Jazz.” The free mobile concerts bring the music directly to the people where they are. Free jazz workshops and free lecture/demonstrations for youth are important parts of its outreach. Through all its programs, it estimates it serves 250,000 people each year. Headliners on other dates in Newark included Houston Person, Barry Harris, the Earl May Legacy Band, Winard Harper and more.

